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HONORABLE MEMBERS OF HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

I am a practicing pediatrician, I live in Douglas, and I am grateful as an Alaska citizen to have the privilege and responsibility to testify in opposition to SB 49 and HB 173

These bills have several flaws. While it addresses the most contentious issue of our Republic's political history since the abolition of slavery, it IMPOSES personal values which restrict access to legal medical services, DISRESPECTS personal choice of women, which means sexual discrimination, and of most importance DENIES the reality of mind and body connection in human health. Neuroscience continues to show how our brain influences physical health and illness. Physical illnesses such as cancer and trauma injuries like domestic violence, child maltreatment, concussions, and traumatic brain injuries impose continuing mental stress and make a huge influence on our brains. Social and behavioral disorders also have huge influence on our brains.

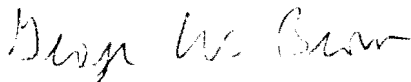
Unintended pregnancies can produce intense stress on brains. Not uncommonly, some intended pregnancies that conclude with healthy newborns result in post-partum depression, now well recognized in medical practice. Persons who are trying to cope with such physical and social stresses can cope with them. Successful coping can be enhanced with family, health, and social supports, which opens possibilities to other and future choices and healing.

Laws which deny personal choices about health care add more stress to individuals. Persons who have never been pregnant or who can never become pregnant cannot really understand these particular stresses. Persons who are or who have been pregnant are more experienced for seeking and finding the most appropriate choices to deal with these stresses.

There is a more positive option for all of us in this complex social dilemma. As we try hard to be tolerant about others values, understand the deep complexities of individual and social behavior, and to listen with the intent to hear all voices, we can come together to accept and increase practices which prevent as many as possible future unintended pregnancies. This is in no way simple, but it has been done for decades and does work when practiced. It also can redirect our energies away from conflict toward cooperation. There is certainly much more we can all do to improve male understanding about violence and pregnancy prevention and to increase their practice of respect and birth control. I hope you will vote against these bills and work toward preventive legislation action.

Thank you for listening. I welcome your questions and comments.

Respectfully,



George W. Brown, MD

Feb 25, 2014